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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 001234

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PK](#) [IN](#) [INDO](#) [PAK](#)

SUBJECT: KASHMIR BUS AGREEMENT A ""HISTORICAL MILESTONE""

Classified By: Ambassador David C. Mulford. Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

- [11](#). (C) Summary: The February 16 agreement by India and Pakistan to begin bus service across the LOC between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad begins
- [12](#). (C) Initial reactions in the Valley to the February 16 agreement have been largely positive, although there remains a significant reserve
- [13](#). (C) Separatist opinion is predictably divided, with the moderate All-Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) more positive than the pro-independence
- [14](#). (C) JKLF leader Ghulam Rasool Dhar, reached while Chairman Yaseen Malik was travelling, was non-committal, raising concerns about proceeding pro-independence or separatist-oriented Kashmiris). According to one journalist in Srinagar, SAS Geelani has already diminished the achievement
Comment

- [15](#). (C) The major beneficiaries of this agreement -- the most significant Kashmir-related CBM since the November 2003 LOC ceasefire -- will
- [16](#). (C) With news still fresh, modalities unclear, and many memories of false starts in Indo-Pak relations, Kashmiris remain predictably cautious. Nevertheless, if the first bus departs for Muzaffarabad on April 7, the symbolism of the LOC opening could have further implications for India
MULFORD